Coaching Effectiveness: How Learners' Attitude and Participation Mediate Trust Effect on Coaching Outcomes

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Abstract

Coaching is not a newly introduced concept, yet has not been actively considered in work settings until recent years. Coaching has a one-on-one, interactive nature and the learner is not a passive recipient. While the coach facilitates a learner's self-development, the learner plays an active role and makes critical decisions throughout the process. Quality of relationship determines effectiveness of interaction between the facilitator and the learner. The present study aims 1) to establish the effect of trust on coaching outcomes and 2) to examine the mediator effect brought by learners' attitude and participation.

Managerial coaching refers to the facilitation offered by managers on their subordinates' self-development. One hundred and thirty-one full-time employees from different industries were interviewed with a structured self-administered questionnaire. Participants evaluated their trust level with current direct boss as well as their self-development outcomes under managerial facilitation. Structural Equation Modeling results confirmed that trust in the relationship between the facilitator and the learner predicted coaching outcomes in terms of a) satisfaction, b) goal achievement, and c) actual improvement. The results also revealed that learners' a) resistance level towards managerial coaching and b) degree of active participation in the process partially mediated the trust effect on coaching outcomes. Implications of the research findings are discussed.

摘要

啓導並不是一個新推出的概念，只是直到近年才被積極地考慮及應用於工作環境。啓導有一對一的互動性質，而學習者並不是被動的接受者。在啓導者促進學習者自我發展的同時，學習者擔當一個主動的角色，在過程中作出重要決定。關係的素質決定促進者與學習者之間的互動有效度。本研究旨在 1) 確立信任度對啓導結果的影響，以及 2) 檢察由學習者的態度和參與所帶出的中介者效果。

員工啓導是指上司促進下屬的自我發展。本研究以自填問卷形式訪問了 131 名來自不同行業的全職工作者。參與者評估了其與現任直屬上司之間的信任度，及在上司促進下的自我發展結果。結構方程模型的結果確定了促進者與學習者之間的信任在 1) 滿意度，2) 目標成就，及 3) 實質改進幾個方面預測得到啓導結果。結果同時指出學習者 1) 對員工啓導的抗拒度，及 2) 在過程中的主動參與度，以中介者形式解釋了部分信任度對啓導結果的影響。本文亦探討了研究結果的啓示。

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Many organizations recognize the importance of human capital and are willing to invest in it. Different forms of training and development activities are arranged whenever appropriate. The major objective is to dig out employees' potential for staff development as well as organizational growth (Amish, Cayes & Lipsky, 2006; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005; Minter & Thomas, 2000; O'Neill, 2005). Classroom training which promotes learning through group teaching is most commonly adopted. This is an economic and effective means for mechanical skill training and fact-based learning. However, as reinforced by Shea (2003) in his book, *The Mentoring Organization*, classroom training is not suitable for learning soft skills because there are no universal rules or fact-based principles for the learners to follow. Mastering these skills involves flexible application of learned knowledge according to unique characteristics in the scenario. Effective learning is believed to occur in an interactive interpersonal environment instead.

Coaching and mentoring are one-on-one, interactive learning and/or helping relationships. They differ from classroom training in terms of both nature in learning and topics to be taught (Peterson, 2002). 'How to do' instructions or fact-based principles for effective performance are often given to the learners in classroom training but not in coaching and mentoring. Instead of taking instructions and absorbing knowledge in a passive manner, the learners (i.e. coachees

or mentees) have to participate throughout the process actively for effective learning. The facilitators (i.e. coaches or mentors) guide the learners forming alternatives by themselves, evaluating their alternatives and making a choice among the alternatives. The learners find their own way and style to handle problems that might not have a standard, absolute solution. Therefore, coaching and mentoring are both suitable for soft skill training such as interpersonal skills, communication, and leadership.

Usage of mentoring can be found as early as in the Middle Ages. However, these learning relationships have not been actively utilized in organizations for staff development until recent decades. Researchers share some degree of similarities in their understanding about coaching and mentoring, yet have not achieved a consensus on how to define these learning relationships (Peterson & Hicks, 1999). Moreover, little empirical studies have been done on their effectiveness. Minter and Thomas (2000) suggested linking the choice between coaching and mentoring to staff performance. They claimed that coaching is more effective for high performers, mentoring works better with average performers, and counseling is suitable for managing marginal or problem performers. Although this claim has not been examined empirically, it addresses the issue that different approaches serve diverse objectives and could be damaging in inappropriate use (Amish, et al., 2006; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kilburg, 1996). To guide the organizations making the right choice, more in-depth understanding on coaching and mentoring is required.

Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are two highly similar concepts but they are not simply the same. Unfortunately, the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably by some practitioners in the field (Peterson, 2002). After a more detailed introduction on these two concepts, this section presents some comparisons on major similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring.

Back to the Middle Ages, older and wiser people passed on their knowledge and experience on a specific area to a younger generation. This is seen as the initial form of mentoring (Shea, 2003). A mentor is "a higher ranking, influential individual in the work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge and is committed to providing upward mobility and support to the … (mentee's) … career" (Ragin & Cotton, 1999, p.535). In a book, *Power Mentoring*, Ensher and Murphy (2005) highlighted that voluntary participation is a crucial success factor in a formal mentoring program. In terms of a mentoring relationship, the chemistry come with appropriate matching determines the effectiveness of interaction between the mentor and mentee. Mentoring is sometimes regarded as an effective approach to help people adjust themselves in front of rapid changes in career and personal lives.

Kram (1985) in his Mentor Role Theory proposed two major categories of mentor functions: career development and psychosocial functions. Career

development functions include sponsorship, coaching, protection, challenging assignments and exposure. All these functions are focused on helping mentees advance in the organization and in their career path. Success of a mentor in assuming these roles depends very much on his/her power and position in the organization as well as his/her personal network in the field. Psychosocial functions include acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship, and role modeling. They are applied to improve mentees' sense of competence and self-efficacy in professional and personal development. Quality of interpersonal relationship and emotional bond between mentor and mentee determines the effectiveness of this set of mentor functions.

While the mentor has a list of roles or functions to perform, the mentee also plays a very important role in the success of a mentoring relationship. A mentoring relationship is interactive and tailor-made to address mentee's unique development needs. The mentee is usually highly involved in the design of training content and approach. Shea (2003) in his book described the essence of a mentoring relationship as "Mentees HELP-Mentees DO!" Lewis (1996) echoed in his book, *The Mentoring Manager*, that mentees have to set their own learning goals as well as career goals under mentors' facilitation. They have to make own decisions even on whether or not to take mentors' suggestions and what to do in each step. If a mentee is not motivated to learn from the mentoring relationship, effort inserted by

the mentor is going to be wasted. The mentor at the same time is going to be overloaded and might be too tired to keep the relationship with the mentee.

Coaching is the focus of the present study. Based on the origins of the word *coaching*[1], Stern (2004) stated that coaching in general can be understood as a process in which "a coach helps to carry [the coachee] from one point to another" (p.154). Similarly, Redshaw (2000) described coaching as a "process of giving guidance, encouragement and support" to the coachee (p.106). In a more elaborated version, Peterson and Hicks (1995) defined it as a "process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective" (p.41). A coach is therefore responsible to facilitate coachees in developing and implementing their own improvement strategies (Case & Kleiner, 1993; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Hall et al., 1999; Redshaw, 2000; Stern, 2004). By this definition, coaches are not supposed to provide any technical advice or to direct the planning and execution of any specific actions. In spite of this fact, Feldman and Lankau (2005) addressed the difficulties in identifying and delivering "pure" coaching without advising in practice due to the demand of multiple and diverse service from coaches in general.

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[1] According to Stern (2004), the wording *coaching* come from the Hungarian village of Kocs. "The more comfortable, covered wheeled wagon or carriage (koczi) first developed there to carry its passengers through the harsh terrain, protected from the elements on their way from their point of departure to their ultimate destination" (p.154).

Although the practitioners might define coaching in different ways, they generally share the view that effect of coaching is rooted in a sense of self-awareness among the learners (Wales, 2003). When the learners are made aware of their behaviors as well as the needs to adjust their behaviors, they are ready to change, to breakthrough, and to transform. However, when they are resistant to change, it could be rather difficult for them to establish such sense of self-awareness. As long as they have a good understanding on themselves in terms of attitudes, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses, the learners can have a more accurate perception on their potential and identify an effective direction to improve or develop themselves.

Coaching and mentoring are similar to certain extent in various aspects. They share the same ultimate goal which is to guide people's learning, growth and development. In a closer examination, some differences can be identified between the two concepts in their roles and scopes: Mentors are sometimes regarded as advisors who give advice and tell people directly the tactics. Coaches, however, assume only a facilitator role that leads people to explore alternatives and make their own choice. In terms of the scope of goal or learning objective, development goal in mentoring can be as broad as career development. Mentors put efforts to help mentees' upward movement in the organization and in their career. They give some career advice to mentees in a broad sense but seldom provide suggestions on how to improve their communication skills specifically. However, in coaching,

development needs or objectives can be as specific as improving presentation skill and developing leadership.

Success of coaching and mentoring is both rooted in a trusting, committed partnership between the learner and facilitator/advisor. However, some difference is identified in how the partnership is formed. Effective mentorship evolves through mutual identification between the two persons in which the mentor and mentee share certain degree of similarity in their career development. If a mentee identifies the mentor as his/her ideal career model, the mentoring relationship is going to be more effective. Such surface similarities are not major considerations in selecting a coach who is a facilitator but not a role model. A coach is not necessary to be an expert in a given topic but might be more knowledgeable about how people learn. For effective coaching, the coach should have some characteristics that can facilitate the coachee's effective learning. Coach credibility and competence are usually more heavily considered in the selection process.

Learners have to take a proactive role in the learning process for both coaching and mentoring. Learners' active participation is very important and they share the responsibility for their own learning. However, they might have different attitudes toward coaching and mentoring. In most cases, people have a positive (or neutral) attitude toward mentoring. They get voluntary help from a senior person which is perceived as something positive in their career. Toward coaching, people might

generate some negative emotion especially when they perceive coaching as a punishment or a 'problem worker' mark. Such negative reaction might evoke the learners' resistance toward coaching and being unwilling to change. Whenever coaching is suggested in performance appraisal, managers should clearly tell the subordinates why they need to be coached and what they can get from coaching. This is not only taken to manage coachees' reaction but also establish their expectation on coaching.

Coaching and mentoring have their uniqueness in nature of learning. They are appropriate for developing soft skills that have no fact-based principles to follow. These two learning relationships share lots of similarities in their goals, relationship between the learner and facilitator/advisor, and the role of a learner. However, they are not the same. The most commonly shared standpoint in connecting the two relationships is seeing coaching as one of the key roles within mentoring and more specifically as one of career development functions in mentoring. This is reflected in Kram's (1985) Mentor Role Theory as well as Ragin and McFarlin's (1990) measurement on mentor role functions. Such standpoint can explain why coaching usually has a more specific development goal than mentoring. This difference in scope makes coaching more generalizable than mentoring (Peterson, 2002). As a result, coaching can have a broader applicability than mentoring and the present study thus focus on coaching effectiveness.

Coaching in Organizations

Managers in organizations share an increasing awareness of and attention on coaching (Amish, et al., 2006; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005). Parsloe and Rolph (2004) pointed out a changing pattern in staff learning and development within organizations according to the results of a survey. Classroom training at workplace is gradually replaced with coaching especially when there are no universal rules or fact-based principles to follow (Peterson & Hicks, 1996). Redshaw (2000) emphasized the significance of a supportive climate in the organizations to promote coaching and its effectiveness. However, there is short of empirical research done on coaching in organizations and its effectiveness (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001, Kilburg, 1996; Sue-Chan & Latham, 2004). Most of limited literature and research on coaching in organizations were focused on executive coaching but not managerial coaching (Lam, 2004).

Executive coaching is classified based on the job ranking of the coachees. As indicated in its name, the coachees are usually executives in senior management. While the coach can be someone who is working in the organization, it is more likely for the executives to receive coaching service from an external consultant. In a literature review on executive coaching, Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) summarized that executive coaching is not yet well defined and regulated as different components are stressed by the authors in defining and understanding this distinct

intervention. According to their comment, Kilburg (2000) provided a fairly comprehensive definition on executive coaching:

> Executive coaching is "a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement" (p.67).

However, this version does not include the feedback component which is strongly emphasized by some other authors (Feldman, 2001; Hall et al., 1999).

Managerial coaching is a form of internal coaching classified based on the relationship between the coach and coachee. According to Longenecker and Neubert (2005), "internal coaching is critical to developing the leadership resources of an organization by transferring and disseminating the valuable internal knowledge and skills of its most valued human assets to the managers of the future" (p.498). Peer coaching is another form of internal coaching where the coach is a peer of the coachee. However, based on the results of their study, Sue-Chan and Latham (2004) questioned the effectiveness of peers in improving an individual employee's performance. Managerial coaching receives much more attention together with more usage than coaching by peers in the field.

The coach in managerial coaching is obviously a manager in the organization. Longenecker and Neubert (2005) referred it to the coaching relationship between a pair of senior and junior managers. Yet, as a matter of fact, managers at every level can all be a coach of their subordinates (Lam, 2004). Some authors have even included coaching as one of the competencies for managers (Borman & Brush, 1993; Conway, 2000; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Traditionally, management in organizations was rather control-oriented. Managers controlled subordinates' behaviors and closely monitored their performance to ensure that current business goals were achieved. Today, management orientation seems to have shifted to be more people focused. Managers insert effort to develop their people's potential for the sake of meeting future organizational needs. Coaching is seen as a natural and necessary component in such a people-oriented management view. Humphrey and Stokes (2000) discussed in their book, *The 21st Century Supervisor*, that coaching is part of managerial work in the new century.

While coaching is part of managerial work, managerial coaching is clearly different from daily supervision which is usually major duty of a manager. Daily supervision is rather control-oriented and is often linked to some task-oriented goals. Managers act as a problem shooter in front of their subordinates. They instruct their subordinates what to do whenever necessary in order to meet current business targets. On the other hand, coaching comes with people orientation and is utilized to achieve

certain development goals. This is related to relatively long-term growth of the business and the people. As a coach, managers do not tell their subordinates how to do but lead them to think about how to solve a problem. In conclusion, managers coach for potential instead of performance problems.

The present study focuses on managerial coaching and aims 1) to establish trust effect on coaching outcomes and 2) to examine mediator effect brought by learners' attitude and participation in a coaching relationship. In present study, managerial coaching refers to the facilitation offered by managers on their subordinates' self-development. Coaching sessions thus refer to the discussion sessions between a manager and the subordinate regarding the latter party's self-development issues.

Development of a Coaching Relationship

An appropriate matching is critical to the success of a coaching relationship, yet it is not relied on surface similarities between the two parties. Industry experience, for example, is not very important in selection of a coach (Dutton, 1997). Linda (1992) demonstrated that good managers are not necessarily to be good coaches. At the same time less experienced managers can be doing well in coaching their people. There seems no direct connection between managerial experience and coaching effectiveness though experience may shape the sense of coaching efficacy among the managers. Rather, trust level in relationship between the coach and coachee matters (Jones & Spooner, 2006; Peterson, 2002).

Trust in Relationship

Different coaches might use different approaches in helping their coachees. No matter which approach is adopted, the first step is always relationship building to establish trust and mutual expectations (Dotlich & Cairo, 1999). Trust in relationship is the base for effective interaction and thus effective coaching. Peterson (2002) remarked that "the coach needs to pay particular attention to building trust and rapport by understanding what the person hopes to accomplish through coaching" (p.178). Building trust is the number one task in first few coaching sessions. Maintaining trust share the same degree of importance in the subsequent sessions. Jones and Spooner (2006) highlighted that emphasizing the confidential nature of the coaching relationship continually can be a way to maintain trust level in the relationship throughout the process.

As mentioned by the authors, it is no doubt that trust in relationship is positively associated with coaching effectiveness. However, it is still unclear at the moment how trust influences coaching outcomes. The present study attempted to identify any mediators between trust in relationship and coaching effectiveness. The interactive characteristic of coaching makes it different from traditional classroom teaching. This implies that the learners share a significant role in shaping the outcomes. The present study focused on learners' perspective and explored the mediation effect brought by their attitude and participation.

Learners' Resistance toward Coaching

Receiving coaching was seen as a black mark in the old days, because it was conventionally adopted as a performance management tool to deal with problem behaviors (Dotlich & Cairo, 1999; Peterson, 2002). Such a negative and remedial usage was rooted in an assumption that humans were resistant to change. People were unwilling to change their behaviors because they did not think that their behaviors were problematic. The key objective of coaching was therefore to fix people's problem behaviors. Through coaching, people were able to assess their own performance, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and instruct them to change their behaviors.

Today, coaching is sometimes viewed more positively as a proactive tool to develop people's potential (Frisch, 2001; Latham et al., 2005). The assumption on human nature has shifted from change resistance to learning motivation. People are believed to be motivated to learn and to grow. They understand themselves in terms of their current performance and look for assistance from a specialist to discover their potential. Coaching is therefore applied to develop potential and to improve future performance. The coach might not be an expert in a specific topic but know more about how people learn in general.

Coaching now has a positive image and usage. However, some people still react negative to the idea of being coached especially when coaching comes as an

outcome of performance appraisal. Their worries might not be directly related to coaching but indirectly through concerns on own job performance and insecure feelings associated with the needs to change themselves. Managing coachees' understanding and expectation on coaching is therefore critical to the success of a coaching experience. Trust in relationship is seen as a necessary base for establishing such understanding and expectation and reducing coachees' resistance toward coaching. When the coachee does not resist to be coached, s/he can be more involved in coaching and possible to get better outcomes.

Learners' Participation in Coaching

The coach and coachee work in partnership for effective coaching. The coach might not be an expert in a specific topic but know more about how people learn in general. The coach utilizes his/her knowledge on learning principles to facilitate the coachees in exploring ways to improve themselves. By principle, the coach does not have to provide external feedback on the coachee's performance but has to facilitate the coachee in generating internal feedback. In other words, the coachee should take a proactive role in developing himself/herself.

Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) documented the facilitating and empowering characteristics of managerial coaching. These characteristics are consistent with the concept that learners have to set their own goals and make decisions in the coaching process. Ellinger and Bostrom highlighted that managers' perception on their

ability to facilitate the subordinates' learning and development is critical in their coaching. Taking a more proactive approach, Lam (2004) in her mater's thesis constructed a 6-item scale to gauge the self perception among the managers. Two of the items are related to "the subordinate's readiness and motivation to learn" and formed a meaningful sub-construct. The results showed that when the coachee participates actively and is ready to learn, the coach is more motivated and is more confident in facilitating the coachee's self-development. As a result, the coachee can get more and better results from coaching.

Though there is no consensus on coaching competence among researchers, a good coach is generally believed to have good communication skill (McLean et al., 2005). In a master's thesis, Gegner (1997) revealed that self-efficacy and communication are most effective in influencing executives' performance, among the nine components in executive coaching[2] (cited in Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Through active listening, a good coach encourages the coachee to share more his/her feelings and thoughts. With good understanding on what the coachee wants to get from coaching, the coach can be more effective in encouraging the coachee to participate in coaching actively. When the coachees are actively involved in their self-develop, they are likely to practice more those newly learned

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[2] The nine components in executive coaching mentioned by Genger (1997) were goals, feedback, self-efficacy, rewards, communication style, interpersonal style, responsibility and awareness (cited in Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001).

skills between coaching sessions. According to Peterson (2002), if a person is active in pushing his/her comfort zone by practicing just 5 minutes on a daily basis, he/she can obtain meaningful progress in most area.

Hypotheses

Level of trust in relationship between the coach and coachee is expected to have a positive relationship with quality of coaching outcomes. When trust is high, the coachee can get better results from the coaching relationship. From learner's perspective, subordinates who trust in their managers more will achieve better self-development outcomes under managerial facilitation. Such relationship is mediated by learners' attitude and participation.

A negative relationship is expected between trust and resistance toward coaching. High level of trust in relationship between the manager and subordinate can help reducing the subordinate's level of resistance toward managerial coaching. When the subordinate is less resistant toward coaching, he/she is more ready to change under managerial facilitation and will participate in coaching more actively. Therefore, resistance toward coaching should have a negative impact on coaching outcomes. Moreover, subordinates' level of active participation is expected to have a positive relationship with self-development outcomes achieved under managerial coaching. When the subordinates participate more actively in their self-development, they can obtain better outcomes from managerial coaching.

H1 Subordinates who trust in their managers more will be less resistant toward coaching

H2 Subordinates who are less resistant toward coaching will have more active participation in coaching

H3: Subordinates who have more active participation in coaching will achieve better coaching outcomes

Figure 1 presents the proposed model relating the trust in relationship and coaching outcomes.

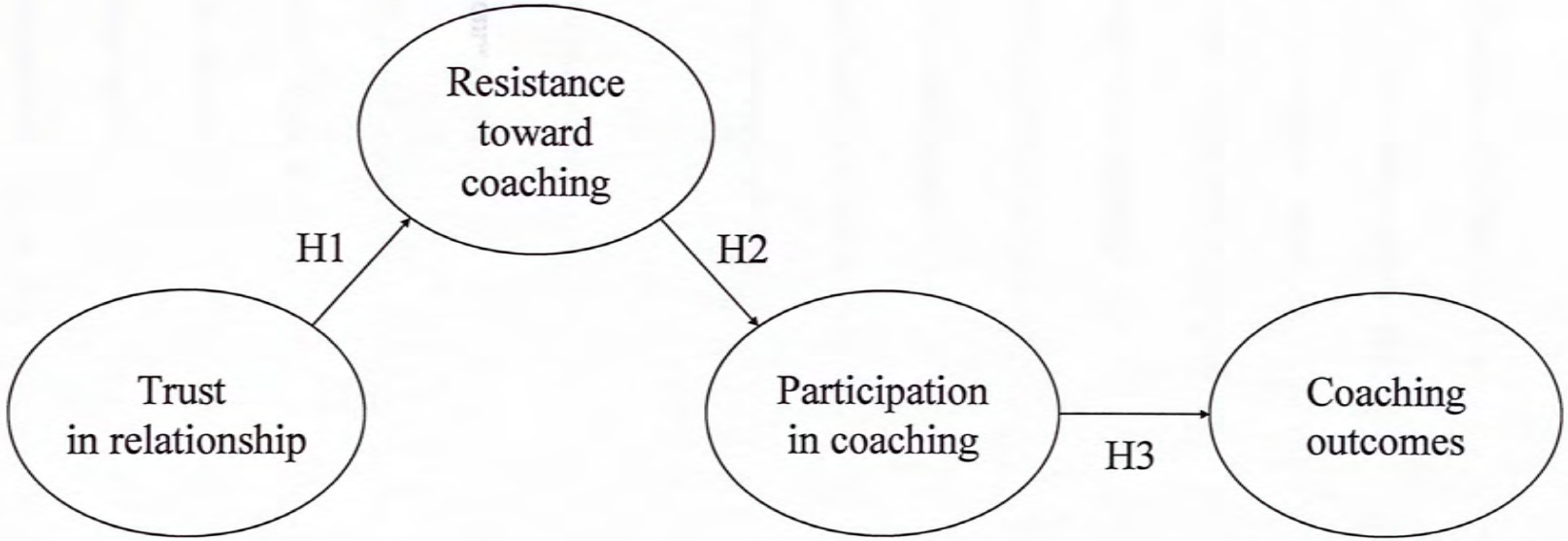

Figure 1. Proposed Model Relating the Trust in Relationship and Coaching Outcomes

CHAPTER TWO: METHOD

Participants

A sample of 131 full-time employees was recruited from different industries by referral. Part-time employees usually did not receive the same degree of attention from the managers. Normally, they were not the coaching targets of the managers. As a result, no part-time employees were included in present study.

Managerial coaching referred to the facilitation offered by managers on their subordinates' self-development. The present study attempted to evaluate the trust effect on coaching outcomes. Therefore, full-time employees who had never discussed with current direct boss regarding their self-development issues were not eligible subjects in this study.

Measures

All participants were required to fill out a structured self-administered questionnaire either on the Internet or in a printed copy subject to their convenience. The structured questionnaire covered information about the dependent and predictor variables. Since there were no well-established scales ready for use, multiple items were developed for these variables with reference to relevant scales used in other disciplines such as clinical psychology. Items were reviewed by a professional coach before use. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree". In addition, some questions about demographic

and job-related information were included.

Coaching Outcomes

The ultimate goal of coaching was to improve subordinates' performance under managerial facilitation. Actual improvement in self-performance was clearly another critical evaluation dimension on coaching effectiveness. While coaching was known to be useful, Peterson and Hicks (1999) found that coaching outcomes were not measured and evaluated in many organizations. They suggested that coaching effectiveness should be evaluated in accordance with the goals set at the beginning of a coaching relationship. This indicated that goal achievement conceptually was another dimension for evaluating coaching effectiveness.

In present study, coaching outcomes were measured in both dimensions: Goal achievement, and Actual improvement. Goal achievement was measured by four items and "I can achieve the self-development goals that I intend to through discussion with my boss" was a sample item. Actual improvement was measured by another three items and "I now perform better on my job because of my boss's development guidance" was a sample item.

Trust in Relationship

Hall and his colleagues (2002) developed a scale to measure patients' trust in their primary care providers. Out of the 26 items in the initial pool, ten of them were selected and formed four subscales: Global, Fidelity, Honesty and Competence.

All these four subscales were carefully reviewed at the item level. Fidelity, Honesty and Competence were very specific to the patient care construct. In Global subscale, trust in relationship was measured in a more generalizable sense. As a result, the four items in this subscale were modified to be more related to the coaching construct and included in the present study to measure trust in relationship between managers and subordinates. "I completely trust my boss's guidance about which development approaches are best for me" was a sample item used after modification.

Learners' Resistance toward Coaching

The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ) was developed by Hayes and his colleagues (2004) to measure experiential avoidance. Among the 32 items in the initial pool, nine of them were retained and formed a single construct. Further revision on the nine items revealed some differences among them. Three of these items were related to subjects' feelings (e.g., I'm not afraid of my feelings), another three about subjects' actions (e.g., when I feel depressed or anxious, I am unable to take care of my responsibilities), and the remaining three about subjects' cognition (e.g., when I evaluate something negatively, I usually recognize that this is just a reaction, not an objective fact). Since resistance toward coaching was related to learners' attitude or feeling but not actions and cognition, only three feeling-related items were generalized to the coaching construct and included in the present study

after essential modification on the items. "It is bad to have to discuss with my boss about how to improve myself" was a sample item used after modification.

Learners' participation in Coaching

Learners in coaching have to take a proactive role for effective learning (Ellinger and Bostrom,1999; Peterson, 2002; Shea, 2003). At the beginning, the learners have to communicate with coach about their expectations and identify jointly what to be achieved through coaching. They should be clear about own development needs and objectives. Throughout the process, the learners have to put efforts in exploring own ways to develop themselves under coach's facilitation.

In the present study, subordinates' participation in managerial coaching was measured in two dimensions: Expectations and objectives, and Efforts to explore. Expectations and objectives were measured by four items. "I expect to get model answers from my boss" was a sample, reversed item. Three items were used to measure Efforts to explore. "I spend efforts to explore possible approaches that fit my development needs and personal characters" was a sample item.

Table 1 presents a summary of items covered in the questionnaire.

Table 1

Summary of Items Covered in the Questionnaire

Scale	Sub-scale	Item
Outcome	Goal achievement	- I believe I can receive full value from my boss's guidance in self-development. - My boss can bring out my very best. - I can achieve the self-development goals that I intend to through discussion with my boss. - I can achieve additional worthwhile goals in discussion with my boss about how to improve myself.
	Actual improvement	- I now perform better on my job because of my boss's development guidance. - I now have skills that I will always benefit from after getting self-development guidance from my boss. - I have developed myself effectively under my boss's guidance.

Table 1 (cont'd)

Summary of Items Covered in the Questionnaire

Scale	Sub-scale	Item
Trust	-	- I completely trust my boss's guidance about which development approaches are best for me. - My boss only thinks about what is best for me. - I have no worries about putting my career development in my boss's hands. - All in all, I have complete trust in my boss.
Resistance	-	- I'm afraid of discussing how to improve myself with my boss. - It is bad to have to discuss with my boss about how to improve myself. - If I could magically remove all the painful experiences I've had in discussing how to improve myself with my boss, I would do so.

Table 1 (cont'd)

Summary of Items Covered in the Questionnaire

Scale	Sub-scale	Item
Participation	Expectations & Objectives	- I expect to get model answers from my boss when discussing how to improve myself. (reversed item) - I have no say about what is to be achieved in a discussion with my boss about how to improve myself. (reversed item) - My development objectives are unclear when discussing with my boss. (reversed item) - I share my feelings with my boss and ask to get what guidance I want and need for my self-development.
	Efforts to explore	- When discussing with my boss about how to improve myself, I often catch myself daydreaming about things I've done and what I would do differently next time. (reversed item) - When I am worrying about some other things at work, I am unable to concentrate on discussion with my boss about how to improve myself. (reversed item) - I spend efforts to explore possible approaches that fit my development needs and personal characters.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

Analysis Overview

Among the 131 participants, nearly three-quarters (74.0%) were females. Three-fifths (59.5%) of them aged under 30, and about four-fifths (82.4%) held a bachelor or higher degree. Year of working experience varied from 0.3 to 30 years with an average of 7.47 years. They worked with their current boss for 2.35 years on average. Nearly two-thirds (64.1%) of them were satisfied with their relationship with current boss, and another two-thirds (66.4%) were active in initiating self-development discussion with their current boss. Table 2 presents a summary of demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 2

Summary of Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	34	26.0
	Female	97	74.0
Age	24 or below	30	22.9
	25 to 29	48	36.6
	30 to 39	40	30.6
	40 or above	13	9.9
Education level	Matriculation or below	23	17.6
	Bachelor degree	70	53.4
	Master degree or above	38	29.0
		Mean	SD
Year of working experience (in Years)		7.35	6.44
Year of working with current boss (in Years)		2.53	2.96
		Frequency	Percent
Satisfaction with current boss			
	Satisfied	84	64.1
	Neutral	32	24.4
	Dissatisfied	15	11.5
Initiation of discussion sessions			
	More by participant	24	18.3
	Half half	63	48.1
	More by the boss	44	33.6
	Valid N	131	

The proposed model displayed in Figure 1 relates the trust in relationship and subordinates' self-development outcomes under managerial facilitation. Such a relationship was mediated by subordinates' resistance toward coaching together with their participation in the coaching process. Four latent constructs were involved: trust in relationship (Trust), resistance toward coaching (Resistance), participation in coaching (Participation), and coaching outcomes (Outcome). Considering the subject-to-item ratio which should better be greater than 10 for stable results, sub-scales were used as indicators in the analysis wherever possible. Therefore, two of these latent constructs, Participation and Outcome, were formed by sub-scale composite scores. Since no sub-scales could be formed for Trust and Resistance, both statistically and conceptually, their items were directly used for analysis. In summary, items and subscales included in each construct were the same as presented in Table 1. All of them were measured from the subordinate's perspective.

Three hypotheses were derived from the model to investigate the mediating effect between trust in relationship and managerial coaching outcomes. Before testing the hypotheses, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the factor structure of each latent constructs and significance of loadings of each item on the constructs. Internal consistence or reliability was then computed for the composite measure of each latent construct. A two-step approach of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1998)

and Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1996) was finally conducted to assess model fit and path coefficient significance of the measurement model and hypothesized effect model.

Analysis Results

According to CFA results, a one-factor structure was established by the items in Trust and Resistance respectively. All items were significantly loaded on each of the two constructs. For Participation, two correlated dimensions were established as proposed by the six items. The dimensions were subordinates' expectations on the coaching experience and involvement in defining their development objectives (Expectations and objectives), as well as efforts put by the subordinates in exploring possible self-development strategies (Efforts to explore). All items were significantly loaded on one of the two dimensions and both dimensions were significantly loaded on a single latent construct.

For Outcome, the seven items formed two correlated dimensions within the construct as proposed. The dimensions were goal and value achieved through coaching (Goal achievement), and actual improvement obtained by subordinates after being coached (Improvement). All items were significantly loaded on one of these dimensions and both dimensions were significantly loaded on a single latent construct.

The composite scales measuring Trust, Resistance, Participation and Outcome

achieved acceptable reliability with Cronbach alphas ranged from 0.65 to 0.92. Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, inter-correlations and reliability estimates of the composite measures of latent constructs in the hypothesized model. Table 3a and Table 3b present the means, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the items of Trust and Resistance constructs respectively. Table 3c and Table 3d present the means, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the sub-scale composite scores of Participation and Outcome constructs respectively.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, Inter-correlations and Reliability Estimates of the Composite Measures of Latent Constructs in the Hypothesized Model

Constructs	No. of items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Trust in relationship	4	2.79	.87	(.88)			
2. Resistance toward coaching	3	2.37	.80	-.29**	(.70)		
3. Participation in coaching	7	3.24	.55	.31**	-.52**	(.66)	
4. Coaching outcome	7	3.13	.76	.73**	-.39**	.42**	(.92)

Note. N=131, Cronbach's Alpha are in parentheses along the diagonal.

** $p < .01$

Table 3a

Means, Standard Deviations and Inter-correlations of the Items of Trust Construct

Items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. I completely trust my boss's guidance about which development approaches are best for me	2.76	.90	1.00			
2. My boss only thinks about what is best for me	2.66	.95	.55**	1.00		
3. I have no worries about putting my career development in my boss's hands	2.68	1.10	.62**	.68**	1.00	
4. All in all, I have complete trust in my boss	3.01	1.08	.60**	.70**	.78**	1.00

Note. N=131

** $p < .01$

Table 3b

Means, Standard Deviations and Inter-correlations of the Items of Resistance Construct

Items	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. I'm afraid of discussing how to improve myself with my oss	2.46	1.00	1.00		
2. It is bad to have to discuss with my boss about how to improve myself	2.19	.95	.54**	1.00	
3. If I could magically remove all the painful experiences I've had in discussing how to improve myself with my boss, I would do so	2.45	1.09	.31**	.50**	1.00

Note. N=131

** $p < .01$

Table 3c

Means, Standard Deviations and Inter-correlations of the Sub-scale Composite Scores of Participation Construct

Sub-scales	No. of items	Mean	SD	1	2
1. Expectations & Objectives	4	3.51	.68	1.00	
2. Efforts to explore	3	3.09	.69	.40**	1.00

Note. N=131

** $p < .01$

Table 3d

Means, Standard Deviations and Inter-correlations of the Sub-scale Composite Scores of Outcome Construct

Sub-scales	No. of items	Mean	SD	1	2
1. Goal achievement	4	3.12	.76	1.00	
2. Actual improvement	3	3.14	.86	.82**	1.00

Note. N=131

** $p < .01$

In the two-step approach of SEM, items and subscales were specified to form the four theoretical constructs as shown in Table 1. In both measurement model and hypothesized model, there were totally 11 indicators and effective sample size was 131 in the present study. The subject-to-item (n/p) ratio was 11.9 which was acceptable. I first performed a CFA to establish a measurement model for validating the operationalization of the theoretical constructs. Model fit and significance of indicator paths were examined. Next, I conducted a SEM to investigate the causal paths among the latent constructs as specified in the hypothesized model. Same as in the first step, model fit and significance of indicator paths were examined. EQS Structural Equations Program (version 6.1) was used to test for the measurement model and hypothesized effect model.

In the first step, CFA results indicated that the measurement model was acceptably good. Although the chi-square test rejected the null hypothesis that the model was good, major fit indices were greater than .9 and provided some convergent evidence in supporting the measurement model's goodness-of-fit ($\chi^2_{(38)} = 72.369, p < 0.001$, NFI = .907, NNFI = .931, CFI = .952, GFI = .911, RMSEA = .083). Moreover, all indicators were significantly loaded on their corresponding latent constructs. Though the latent constructs were significantly correlated, the analysis results were still supportive regarding the heterogeneity of the constructs. Even for the highest inter-correlation between Trust and Outcome

(r=.78, SD=.045), results showed that the two latent constructs were distinguishable. These provided a necessary base for moving forward to SEM in the second step.

In the second step, I established the hypothesized effect model by EQS. No special problem encountered when optimizing the model. All indicators were significantly loaded on their corresponding latent constructs in the hypothesized effect model. Unfortunately, this model was not performing well in goodness-of-fit as revealed by its large and significant chi square value. In addition, its major fit indices were smaller than .9 ($\chi^2_{(41)} = 141.155, p < 0.001$, NFI = .818, NNFI = .814, CFI = .861, GFI = .852, RMSEA = .137). While all three of the hypothesized effect paths were significant, a direct effect path from Trust to Outcome was suggested by LM test results. By adding this path, the chi square value reduced significantly ($\triangle\chi^2 = 65.914, p < .001$). Significant results in chi square difference test supported that the revised model with the direct path was better than the hypothesized model. Overall speaking, the revised model's goodness-of-fit was acceptable ($\chi^2_{(40)} = 75.241$, $p < 0.001$, NFI = .903, NNFI = .933, CFI = .951, GFI = .910, RMSEA = .082).

In the revised model, all indicators were significantly loaded on their corresponding latent constructs. All the effect paths were significant and altogether explained about 63.3% of variance of Outcome. Directions of effects were the same as hypothesized. Trust predicted Resistance in a negative way (-.45). Next, Resistance predicted Participation also negatively (-.79). Finally, Participation

predicted Outcome positively (.20). All these paths together indicated that Trust has a significant indirect effect on Outcome through Resistance and Participation (.07). In addition to the indirect effect, the revised model suggested that Trust has a significant, direct effect on Outcome (.70). While Resistance and Participation together mediate the effect of Trust on Outcome, there is a strong direct effect from Trust to Outcome. Such results supported the fact that Resistance and Participation are partial mediators between Trust and Outcome.

Table 4 presents fit indices of measurement model, hypothesized model, and revised model. Figure 2 presents the measurement model with standardized path coefficients and correlation coefficients in Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Figure 3 presents the revised model with standardized path coefficients. Table 5 presents a summary of total, direct and indirect effect in the hypothesized model and revised model.

Table 4

Fit Indices of Measurement Model, Hypothesized Model and Revised Model

Model	χ^2	df	NFI	NNFI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	$\triangle\chi^2$
Measurement	72.369**	38	.907	.931	.952	.911	.083	-
Hypothesized	141.155**	41	.818	.814	.861	.852	.137	-
Revised	75.241**	40	.903	.933	.951	.910	.082	65.914**

Note. χ^2=chi square, df = degree of freedom, NFI = Normed Fit Index, NNFI = Non-Normed Fit Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, GFI = Goodness of Fit Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Estimate, $\triangle\chi^2$ = chi square difference between the revised model and hypothesized model

** $p < .001$

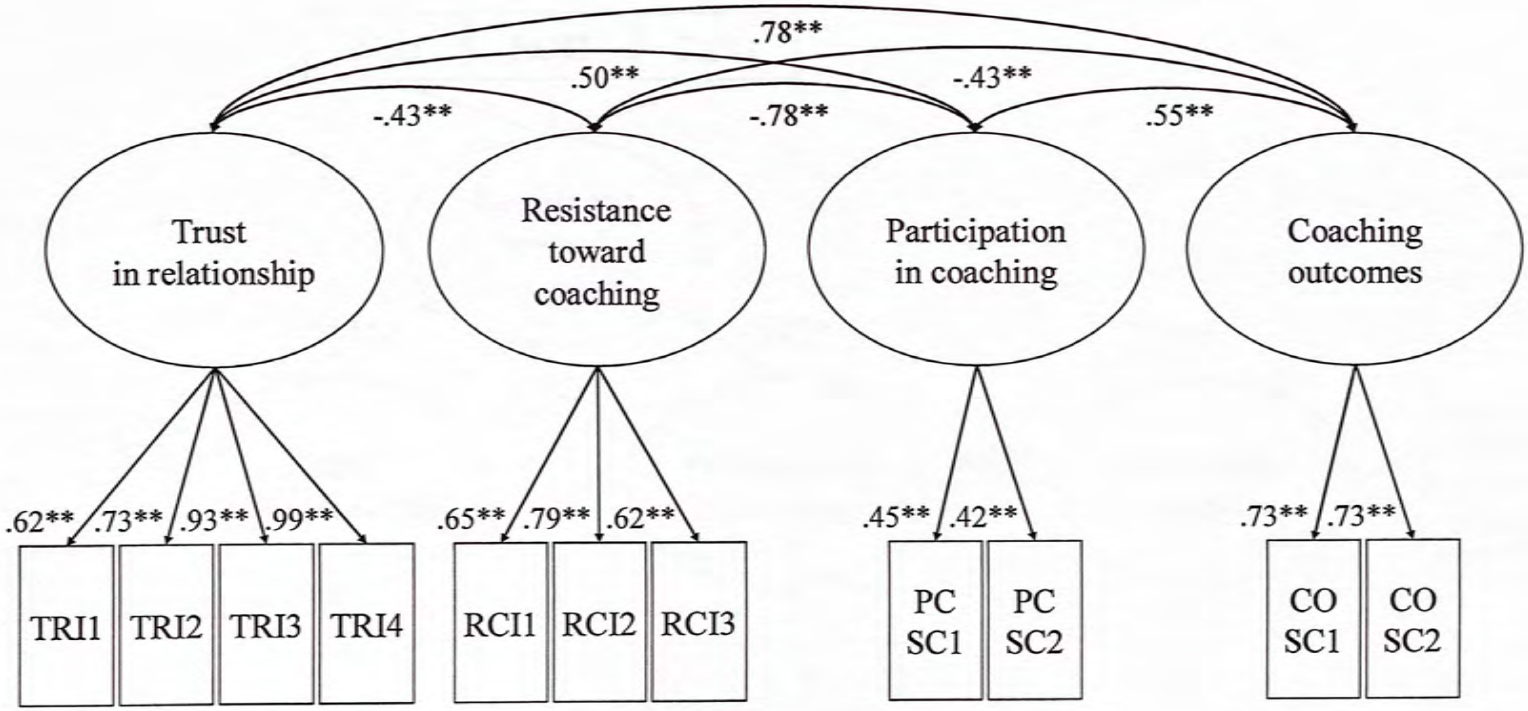

Figure 2. Measurement Model with Standardized Path Coefficients and Correlation Coefficients

Note: TRI = trust in relationship item; RCI = resistance toward coaching item;
PCSC = participation in coaching sub-scale; COSC = coaching outcomes sub-scale

** $p < 0.001$

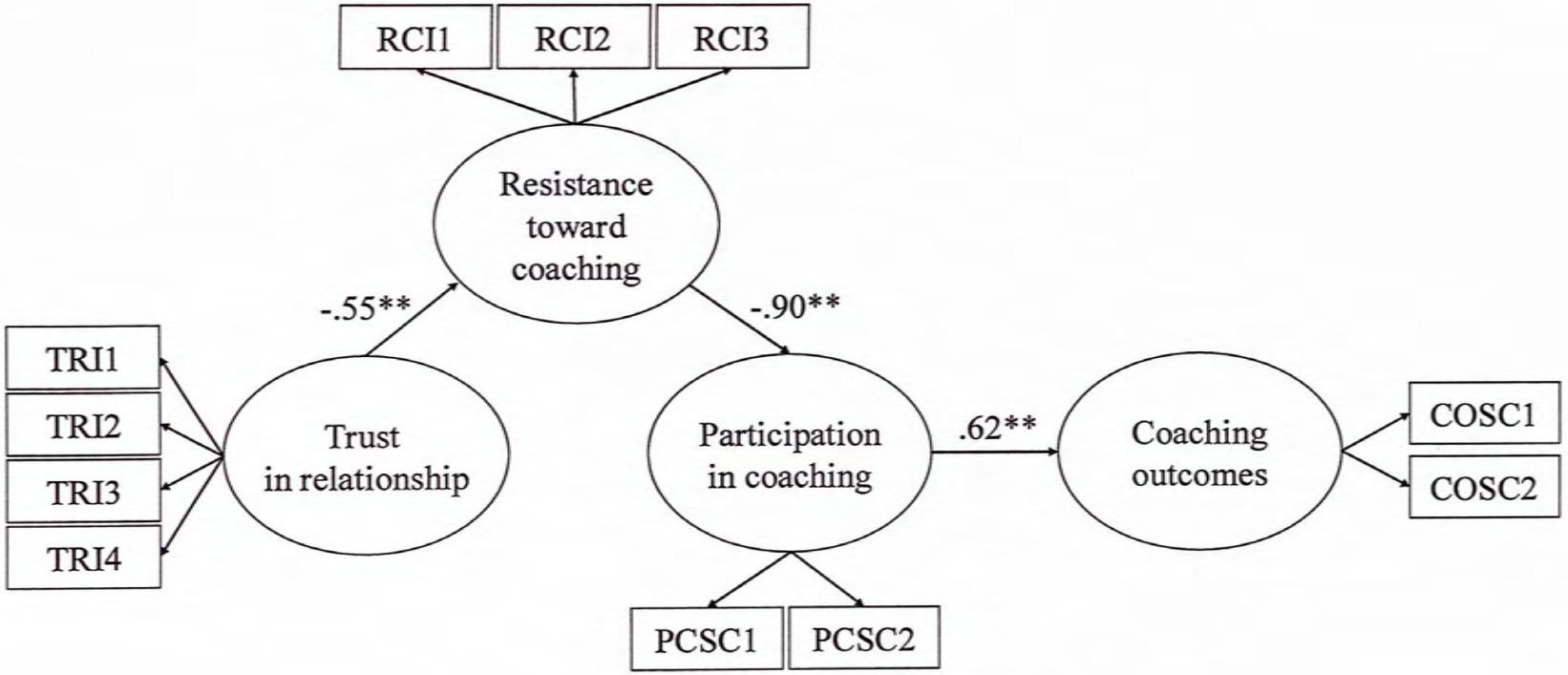

Figure 3. Hypothesized Model with Standardized Path Coefficients

Note: ** $p < 0.001$

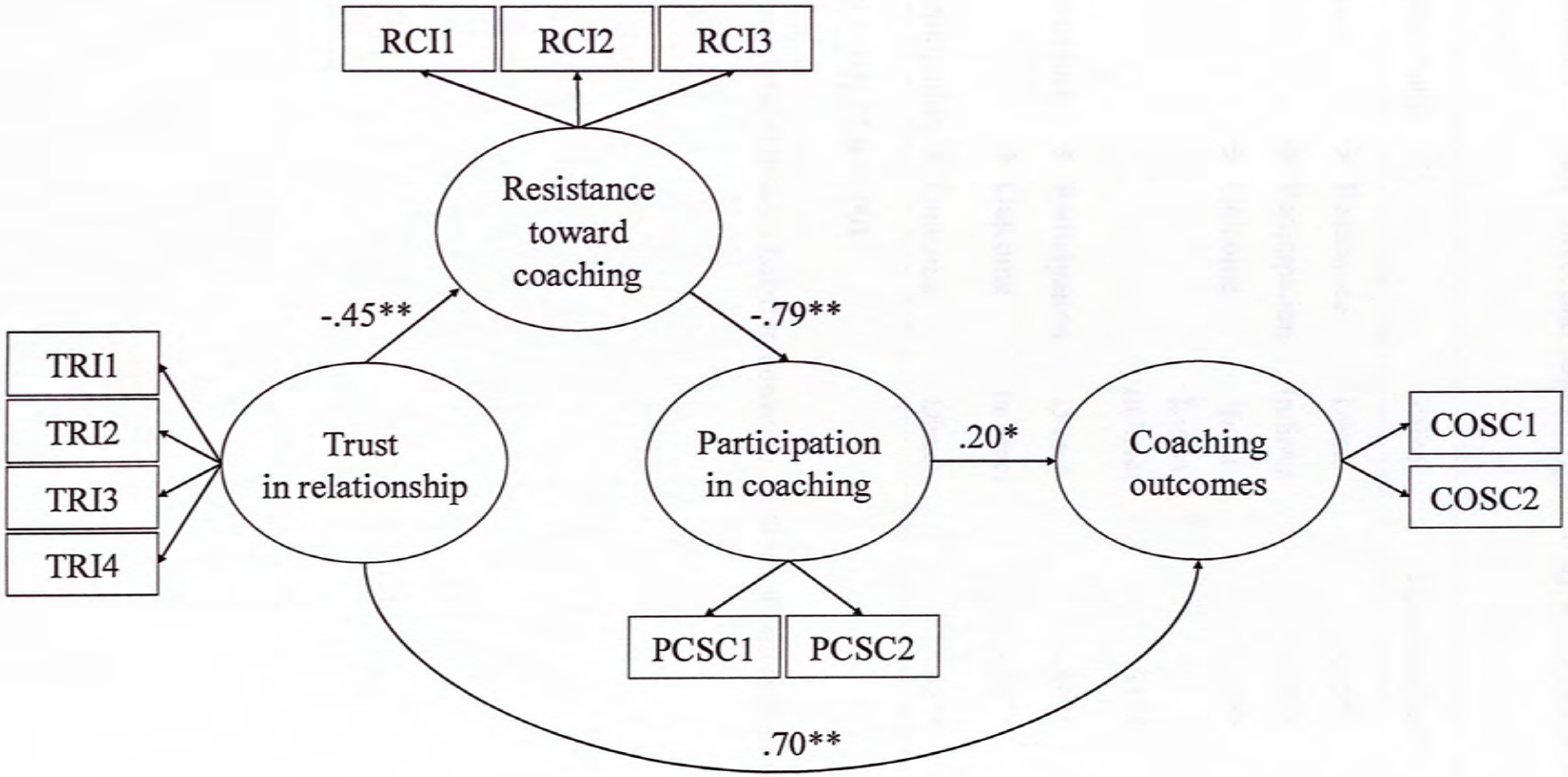

Figure 4. Revised Model with Standardized Path Coefficients

Note: *$p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$

Table 5

Summary of Total, Direct and Indirect Effect in Hypothesized Model and Revised Model

Effect Paths			Effect	Hypothesized[#]	Revised
Trust	→	Resistance	Direct	-.55**	-.45**
	→	Participation	Indirect	.50**	.36**
	→	Outcome	Total	.31**	.77**
			Direct	-	.70**
			Indirect	.31**	.07*
Resistance	→	Participation	Direct	-.90**	-.79**
	→	Outcome	Indirect	-.50**	-.16*
Participation	→	Outcome	Direct	.62**	.20*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

[#] Parameter estimates failed to converge in 30 iterations with all start values at 1.0

Overall, the above SEM results present how trust effect on managerial coaching outcomes is mediated by learners' attitude and participation. While there was a direct effect from Trust to Outcome, the indirect effect through Resistance and Participation was also significant. In consistent with the hypotheses, a negative effect path was established from Trust to Resistance (Hypothesis 1) as well as from Resistance to Participation (Hypothesis 2), and a positive effect path was established from Participation to Outcome (Hypothesis 3). In summary, all three hypotheses were fully supported in the present study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

Managers and Coaching

Coaching is seen as a kind of management tool or managerial skill that can bring positive impacts to both individual coachees and their organizations (Redshaw, 2000). In a recent literature, Longeneckers and Neubert (2005) summarized the potential positive outcomes of effective coaching on both individual employees and their organizations. For individual employees, effective coaching can improve their focus, enhance their motivation, improve their working relationships with others, facilitate their learning and lead them to develop more rapidly. With regard to the organizations, effective coaching can "help create a result-oriented culture, facilitate organizational learning, accelerate problem solving, and also help create additional coaches, as effective coaches model effective coaching" (p.494). Besides the objectives set between the coach and coachee at the beginning of coaching, whether these positive outcomes can be earned depends on degree of coaching effectiveness.

Managerial coaching refers to the facilitation offered by managers on their subordinates' self-development in the present study. In addition to those potential positive outcomes, the present study revealed that effective managerial coaching is related to subordinates' overall satisfaction level with their managerial relationship ($r = .67, p < .01$). While effective coaching is built on trust in relationship between the manager and subordinate, effective coaching can enhance the overall relationship

between the two parties. As discussed by the authors, there is an increasing awareness of coaching and its potential positive outcomes among the managers. However, some managers might be still hesitated in coaching their people because of some misconceptions about coaching.

First, coaching is part of the managerial work but usually not a major daily duty of the managers. In addition, coaching brings relatively long-term development outcomes but little short-term impact. The managers may thus worry that coaching takes up valuable time and brings negative impact to their job performance. This is a misconception that daily job duties are more important than coaching subordinates, and this might be related to the reluctance to coach among the managers. To cope with this, organizations might consider setting coaching as one of the evaluation criteria in performance appraisal.

Requirement of expertise in the specific development area and provision of concrete solutions to the coachees are other common misconceptions about coaching among the managers. They regard themselves unqualified to coach if they do not know more than their subordinates in the given area. They worry that they are not able to provide concrete solutions to the subordinates. However, these are not true. To deliver coaching effectively, managers might not necessary to be an expert in that topic. Rather, they should be more knowledgeable about how people learn. This knowledge allows them to facilitate subordinates' self-development effectively.

Another common reason is that the managers are not confident in coaching. Stern (2004) highlighted that, in order to be effective, a coach has to be confident and should be perceived as confident by the coachee. In most cases, the managers have not received any formal training on coaching. They know that coaching is effective but might not be very clear about what to do (and what not to do) when coaching their people. Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) highlighted that managers' perception on their ability to facilitate subordinates' learning and development is associated with their motivation to coach. In a master's thesis, Lam (2004) demonstrated empirically that managers' perceptual belief on their coaching ability predicts the amount of managerial coaching done by them. To encourage managers to coach, organizations might consider providing formal coaching training to their managers.

Implications to Research and Practice

Managerial coaching starts with trust in relationship. Results of the present study indicated that trust in relationship is a significant predictor of coaching outcomes. Building trust in relationship with subordinates makes managers' coaching work easy. Without sufficient trust, coaching effort inserted by managers is not going to be very effective. Even worse, the managers might lose their credits in the eyes of subordinates because they are doing something ineffectively. Taking the advantage of having high trust level in relationship, managers can reduce subordinates' resistance toward coaching with less effort.

Trust does not come on demand. In their book, *The Coaching at Work Toolkit*, Zeus and Skiffington (2002) provided two basic guidelines on how coaches can display trust in an effective way. First, they suggested the coaches to talk about trust. Putting effort to build trust with their coachees, the coaches can start with discussing the issue of trust with the learners. Such discussion most often is around confidentiality and some other elements that should be included in the coaching agreement. Throughout the discussion, the coaches can gain more understanding on what trust means to the learners.

The second suggestion is to "make commitments that command trust" (p.140). When one party makes such commitments, trust from the other party is required. On the coach side, for example, they are committed to support, challenge and encourage their coachees in their coaching relationship. On the other side, the coachees are committed to try out new methods for improving themselves. These commitments are critical to the success of a coaching experience.

Besides building trust, managers should be alert to subordinates' reaction toward coaching. Analysis results of the present study showed that subordinates' resistance toward coaching has a negative association with coaching effectiveness. If subordinates resist the idea of coaching, they are not going to be engaged in the coaching relationship. This limits the impact of coaching on subordinates' self-development task. Managers should handle subordinates' negative reaction on

coaching in a proactive way.

When trust is established, managers should take means to motivate subordinates in taking an active role in the coaching process. Research results revealed that subordinates' degree of active participation in the process determines coaching outcomes. First, managers should put effort to understand subordinates' expectations and allow them have the say in deciding coaching objectives. Throughout the process, managers should encourage subordinates to express their feelings and voice out their concerns about coaching. The managers and subordinates should work together in exploring possible self-development approaches. This is consistent with the interactive nature of coaching where the learners should not be a passive recipient of knowledge and skills.

Peterson (2002) reinforced that practice between coaching sessions is critical to learning and transfer. With chances to practice, the learners are able to break their old habits and apply new learning to establish new habits. If subordinates are willing to try out new methods, they should be able to achieve better self-development results under managerial facilitation. Therefore, managers should not overlook the importance of developing an effective action plan in guiding subordinates' practice between coaching sessions.

Subordinates' active participation in the coaching process is critical to the success of a coaching relationship. Results of the present study also showed that if

subordinates are active in initiating self-development discussion with their managers, they can achieve better results through coaching ($r = .25, p < .01$). Therefore, managers should be alert to any signs showing that subordinates want to talk about their self-development issues. Such signs indicate a good chance to establish effective coaching with the subordinates.

Limitation and Future Research

There were several limitations associated with the present study. First, the SEM model established trust effect on coaching outcome from subordinates' perspective. All constructs including trust in relationship and coaching outcomes were measured among subordinates only. Evaluations on a relationship can have two sides. Managers represent the other side and are eligible to rate the trust level and outcomes in their coaching relationship with subordinates. To extend our understanding, future research might consider collecting dyadic data from both managers and subordinates for a higher level of measurement on some constructs.

The present study was designed to explore how trust in relationships would affect coaching outcomes. At this exploratory stage, cross-sectional data were collected and examined. However, such design was not free from common method variance bias. In the next step, to further confirm the results and better understand the relationships between latent constructs under investigation, longitudinal design should be seriously considered for future research on the same topic.

Participates in the present sample were recruited from different industries. While the results can be generalized to various industries, industrial factors and also organizational factors could not be controlled and examined in the present study. Hence, besides doing a larger sample, future research should carefully consider focusing on certain industries and/or measuring certain organizational factors to investigate their impact on the relationship between trust and coaching outcome.

As hypothesized, SEM results showed that learners' attitude and participation mediate trust effect on coaching effectiveness. However, the hypothesized full mediation model could not adequately represent the data. A direct path from Trust to Outcome was suggested by SEM results and this came up with a partial mediation model. In the revised model, both direct and indirect effects from trust in relationship to coaching outcomes were significant. The strong direct effect suggested that the proposed mediation path through learners' resistance toward coaching and activeness in participation was not enough in explaining how trust in relationship influenced coaching effectiveness. The present study focused on coachee factors including subordinates' resistance toward coaching and their activeness in participation and investigated how these factors would mediate trust effect on coaching outcomes. However, some other coach-related factors such as managers' coaching approach and commitment might be mediating or moderating the relationship between trust and coaching outcomes. Future research is required to

explore more on other potential factors that mediate or moderate the relationship between trust and coaching effectiveness.

The present study focused on managerial coaching which is a form of internal coaching. There are considerable differences between external and internal coaches in various aspects such as amount of training and level of qualification on coaching. Coachees might have different expectations on external coaching and managerial coaching. As a result, whether the present structural equation model relating trust and coaching outcome can be generalized to coaching delivered by an external consultant is questioned. Future research is needed to investigate the applicability of the present model in explaining how trust in relationship affects the outcomes of external coaching.

Conclusion

Managers are aware of the benefits of coaching. However, they need more guidance and training on how to deliver effective coaching to their subordinates. All three hypothesized effect paths were found to be significant in Structural Equation Modeling analysis. Results revealed that learners' resistance toward coaching and participation in coaching mediate trust effect on self-development outcomes under managerial facilitation. SEM results suggested a direct effect path from trust to coaching outcomes. In conclusion, learners' resistance toward coaching and participation in coaching together are partial mediators in the

relationship between trust and coaching effectiveness.

Trust in relationship is critical to the success of a coaching experience. At the same time, resistance to be coached blocks the progress of coaching. While establishing trust, managers should be alert to subordinates' reaction and make sure that the subordinates are ready before going further in coaching. This is especially true when coaching is suggested in performance appraisal. Finally, managers should bear the facilitator role in mind and allow rooms for subordinates to take a more proactive role on the road of their own self-development.

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